

**INNOVATION SCHOOL  
PROSPECTUS AND INNOVATION PLAN TEMPLATE  
MARCH 2010**

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** This document is a **working draft** developed collaboratively by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education, and the Center for Collaborative Education. It is intended to serve as a template for an Innovation School prospectus and innovation plan for districts to utilize in their local approval processes. *This tool can and should be adapted for local use as appropriate.*

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INNOVATION SCHOOL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>INNOVATION SCHOOL INFORMATION SHEET.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>INNOVATION SCHOOL PROSPECTUS CERTIFICATION STATEMENT.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>INNOVATION SCHOOL INNOVATION PLAN CERTIFICATION STATEMENT.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>PROSPECTUS AND INNOVATION PLAN OUTLINE .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>INNOVATION SCHOOL PROSPECTUS REQUIREMENTS.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>I. MISSION, VISION, STATEMENT OF NEED, AND PROPOSED PARTNER .....</b>	<b>10</b>
A. <i>MISSION STATEMENT</i> .....	10
B. <i>VISION STATEMENT</i> .....	10
C. <i>STATEMENT OF NEED</i> .....	10
D. <i>PRIMARY PROPOSED PARTNERSHIP(S), IF APPLICABLE</i> .....	11
<b>II. HOW WILL AUTONOMY AND FLEXIBILITY BE USED TO IMPROVE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT? .....</b>	<b>11</b>
A. <i>CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT</i> .....	11
B. <i>SCHEDULE AND CALENDAR</i> .....	12
C. <i>STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</i> .....	13
D. <i>DISTRICT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</i> .....	14
E. <i>BUDGET</i> .....	15
<b>III. CAPACITY OF APPLICANT GROUP.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>IV. TIMETABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ESTABLISHMENT.....</b>	<b>17</b>

V. MEASURABLE ANNUAL GOALS ..... 17

VI. REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS ..... 17

## INNOVATION SCHOOL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The [Name of School District] requests proposals for the creation of Innovation Schools in accordance with an *Act Relative to the Achievement Gap* signed into law in January 2010. The proposals can be organized in the format outlined in this document. As specified by state law, there is a two-stage approval process for each Innovation School. A **prospectus** must be approved by a three-person screening committee, and then a more detailed **innovation plan** must be developed by an innovation plan committee and then approved by teachers (in the case of conversions) and the local school committee.

This document outlines the requirements for both stages. Note that elements preceded by **IP** do not have to be addressed until the innovation plan stage.

<b>Deadlines</b>	In order to be considered for a fall 2010 opening, a prospectus must be submitted to the district superintendent by [ <i>locally determined date</i> ].
<b>Format and Submission Requirements</b>	<p>Both the prospectus and innovation plan must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be prepared on plain, 8 ½ x 11” size paper that is suitable for reproduction. Three ring binders will not be accepted.</li> <li>• Contain one-inch margins</li> <li>• Use 11-point font, or larger</li> <li>• Include a Table of Contents that includes attachments</li> <li>• Include page numbers in the bottom right hand corner of each page, including attachments</li> </ul> <p>The prospectus is limited to 30 pages of text, excluding required attachments.</p> <p>The innovation plan is limited to 50 pages of text, excluding required attachments.</p> <p><b><i>At each stage submit:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One (1) bound or stapled original copy,</li> <li>• One (1) unbound copy suitable for photocopying, and</li> <li>• A disk with an electronic copy of the prospectus.</li> </ul>

<b>Where to Mail and/or Drop-off Prospectuses</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">           Superintendent's Office            Name of School District            123 Main Street            Anytown, Massachusetts 12345         </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <i>Please Note: All documents submitted become a part of the public record.</i> </p>
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## INNOVATION SCHOOL INFORMATION SHEET

*This sheet must be included in all prospectus submissions.*

Proposed Innovation School Name:	
Full/Partial Conversion or New:	
Proposed School Address (if known):	
Primary Contact Name:	
Primary Contact Phone Number(s) :	
Primary Contact Fax Number(s) :	
Primary Contact Email Address:	

If conversion:

Existing School Name:	
Existing School Address:	

Proposed Innovation School opening school year: ☐ 2010-11 ☐ 2011-12

Proposed duration of innovation plan (up to five years): ☐ 3 years ☐ 4 years ☐ 5 years

School Year	Grade Levels	Total Student Enrollment	Total number of Staff
First Year			
Second Year			
Third Year			
Fourth Year			
Fifth Year			
...			
At Full Enrollment			

**Will this school serve students from multiple districts?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, list the towns/cities in the proposed regions.

—	—	—
—	—	—
—	—	—

If yes, list the school districts (including regional school districts) in the proposed region. (Use additional sheets if necessary):

_____	_____	_____
—	—	—
_____	_____	_____
—	—	—
_____	_____	_____
—	—	—

## INNOVATION SCHOOL PROSPECTUS CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Proposed Innovation School Name:	
Proposed City/Town Location:	

I hereby certify that the information submitted in this prospectus is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

**Signature of Authorized Person** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Person Information	
Print/Type Name:	
Address:	
Phone Number:	
Fax Number:	
Email Address:	

## INNOVATION PLAN CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Proposed Innovation School Name:	
Proposed City/Town Location:	

Names of innovation plan committee members (no more than 11 individuals) selected in accordance with state law:

Affiliation	Name	Vote to approve innovation plan
Lead applicant member:		
Superintendent or designee:		
School committee member or designee:		
Parent who has one or more children enrolled in the school, or in the case of a new school, in the district:		
Teacher employed by district (selected from among volunteers)		
Teacher employed by district (selected from among nominees submitted by the local teacher's union:		
Member:		
Member:		
Member:		
Member.		
Member:		

I hereby certify that the information submitted in this innovation plan is true to the best of our knowledge and belief and has been approved by a majority vote of the innovation plan committee.

**Signature of Lead Applicant Member** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_



## PROSPECTUS AND INNOVATION PLAN OUTLINE

- ☐ Cover Page
- ☐ Information Sheet
- ☐ Certification Statement
- ☐ Executive Summary – no more than two pages  
Summarize the proposed school’s mission and educational program, the community’s need for this school, and the applicant group’s capacity to make the school a success.
- ☐ Public Statement  
Include a statement of 100 words or less summarizing your proposed school. This statement will be shared with the media. Please be sure to include the school’s proposed location, projected grade span, projected enrollment, and districts served.
- ☐ I. Innovation School Mission, Vision, and Statement of Need
  - ☐ A. Mission Statement
  - ☐ B. Vision Statement
  - ☐ C. Statement of Need
  - ☐ D. *(If Alliance Only)* Proposed Partnership(s)
- ☐ II. How Will Autonomy and Flexibility Be Used?
  - ☐ A. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
  - ☐ B. Budget
  - ☐ C. Schedule and Calendar
  - ☐ D. Staffing Policies and Procedures
  - ☐ E. District Policies and Procedures
- ☐ III. Capacity of Applicant Group
- ☐ IV. Proposed Timetable for Development and Establishment of the Innovation School
- ☐ V. Required Attachments
  - ☐ Statements of commitment and resumes from each applicant group member.
  - ☐ School Improvement Plan, for conversion schools

## ***I. MISSION, VISION, STATEMENT OF NEED, AND PROPOSED PARTNER***

### **A. Mission Statement**

The mission statement defines the core purpose and key values of the school and informs the public about the students the school intends to serve. It should be consistent with high academic standards and be succinct, meaningful, and measurable. A school's mission statement provides the foundation for the entire prospectus and for the up-to-five-year term of the school's innovation plan. Therefore, the mission statement should be reflected throughout all sections of the prospectus.

Provide the mission statement. The mission statement should:

- ✓ Speak to the value of the proposed school, based on its own merit.
- ✓ Inform the public about the students the Innovation School intends to serve.
- ✓ Be consistent with high academic standards and student success.
- ✓ Be succinct and meaningful.
- ✓ Be reflected throughout all sections of the prospectus.

### **B. Vision Statement**

A vision statement should provide readers with an image of the future the applicant group wishes to create. The vision statement should articulate what the school will achieve for the community – students, parents, teachers, board members, and beyond. An effective vision statement aligns with the mission statement and is meaningful and measurable. It also serves as a vivid organizing principle that helps all stakeholders focus on the desired targeted outcomes.

Provide the vision statement. The vision statement should:

- ✓ Illustrate a compelling image of the school's future.
- ✓ Describe the ways in which the school will positively impact all stakeholders in the school.
- ✓ Align with the mission statement.
- ✓ Be meaningful.
- ✓ Serve as an organizing principle for all sections of the prospectus.

In addition, please describe a day in the life of a student and teacher in the school once the innovation plan is in place.

### **C. Statement of Need**

Innovation Schools are to be established for the purpose of improving school performance and student achievement by utilizing increased autonomy and flexibility. An Innovation School may

be established as a new public school or as a conversion (full or partial) of an existing public school. An Innovation School may be operated primarily by school faculty and leadership or in collaboration with one or more external partners.

When providing the school's statement of need, applicant groups should:

- ✓ Speak to why this Innovation School is needed in the proposed district(s).
- ✓ Describe the student population the school will serve and the needs of this population.
- ✓ Describe the specific issues, challenges, or needs that can be addressed or improved by establishing an Innovation School.
- ✓ Explain generally why the autonomy and flexibility provided by an Innovation School is necessary in order to carry out the objectives of the school.
- ✓ Include any evidence or information available on staff, teacher, parent, and/or community interest in the establishment of the proposed Innovation School.
- ✓ *For conversions:* Provide an analysis of the external and internal factors or needs that moved the applicant group to propose an Innovation School.
- ✓ *For conversions:* Describe what the applicant group perceives as barriers presented by the current school structure or roadblocks to successful implementation of the current school improvement plan that would require Innovation status to address.
- ✓ *For conversions:* Describe specific areas of the current school improvement plan – with a focus on student achievement – that would be addressed by increased autonomy with respect to curriculum, budget, school schedule and calendar, staffing, and district policies.

#### **D. Primary Proposed Partnership(s), if applicable**

- ✓ Identify the proposed external partner(s) that will be primarily responsibly for developing the innovation plan under which the school will operate and in which the external partner(s) are responsible for meeting the terms of the performance contract, and explain why the partner(s) were chosen.
- ✓ Describe the nature of the proposed partnership(s) that will serve as the foundation of the Innovation School and why such a partnership is necessary to achieve the mission of the school.
- ✓ Provide evidence of the capacity of the partner to develop and operate the proposed Innovation School.
- ✓ Include specific information about the types of services and/or activities that will be provided by the partner.

## ***II. HOW WILL AUTONOMY AND FLEXIBILITY BE USED TO IMPROVE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT?***

### **A. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**

Innovation Schools have the freedom to choose and/or develop curriculum models that best reflect the mission and educational philosophy of the school and that best serve the needs of the expected

student population. Regardless of whether the curriculum is purchased or internally developed, it is important that it aligns with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (MCF) since Massachusetts Comprehensive Accountability System (MCAS) tests are based on the learning standards outlined in the MCF. Additional information about the MCF can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/>. Innovation Schools also have the freedom to determine the instructional methods that will be used to deliver the chosen curriculum model(s), as well as the local assessments used to track student progress and inform instruction.

When describing how the school will use curricular autonomy, applicant groups should:

- ✓ Describe the school's instructional and student assessment philosophy and how this aligns with the school's mission.
- ✓ Discuss any special academic/curricular themes the Innovation School will feature, if any.
- ✓ Generally describe the curriculum, instructional methods, and assessments that will be used by the school.
  - If this differs from the district's current curriculum, instructional methods, or assessments, explain why a change is necessary.
  - *For conversions*, explain how the chosen curriculum, instructional program, and assessments differ from the school's current practice and why changes are necessary.
- ✓ Describe the implementation of the educational program in terms of the daily or weekly organization of students and faculty groupings (e.g., multi-grade, tracking, team-teaching, etc.) and target class sizes and teacher-student loads.
- ✓ Describe the school's approach to literacy and numeracy instruction for diverse learners.
- ✓ Describe how the curriculum will address the needs of English language learners, and students with special needs.
- ✓ Describe your proposed plan to assess student performance beyond MCAS. What formative and summative measures will you use to determine student progress and success?
  - If this differs from the district's current curriculum, instructional methods, or assessments, explain why a change is necessary.
  - *For conversions*, explain how the chosen curriculum, instructional program, and assessments differ from the school's current practice and why changes are necessary.
- ✓ **IP:** Describe the proposed exit or graduation requirements and how the school will measure student progress to determine whether they are ready for graduation.
- ✓ **IP:** Describe how the chosen curriculum, instructional methods, and assessments are expected to improve school performance and student achievement and are necessary for the school to achieve its mission.

## B. Schedule and Calendar

Innovation Schools have the freedom to set their own school schedule and calendar for both staff and students, with the goal of maximizing quality instruction for students and professional

development for staff.

When describing how the school will use school schedule and calendar autonomy, applicant groups should:

- ✓ Describe the school calendar and daily/weekly schedule for students and how the program or calendar is enhanced or expanded. Include the number of days school will be in session, the daily hours of operation, and the way the school will be organized for instruction, independent study, and extra or co-curricular activities. Please be specific in describing these items and pay attention to the state requirements on minimum number of school days and instructional hours as described in 603 CMR 27.00, available online at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr27.html>.
- ✓ Describe the calendar and daily/weekly schedule for staff, and how time will be used to maximize professional development and collaborative planning time focused on instruction and student learning.
- ✓ Provide reasons for why the proposed school calendar and schedule are necessary for the school to achieve its mission.
- ✓ *For conversions:* Describe how the proposed school calendar and schedule differs from the school's current calendar and schedule and why changes are being made.
- ✓ **IP:** Specifically identify collective bargaining provisions related to schedule and calendar that are proposed to be waived or modified.

### **C. Staffing and Professional Development**

Innovation Schools have the freedom to set their own staffing policies and procedures through waivers or exemptions from contracts or collective bargaining agreements (approval by two-thirds of the current teachers is required for conversion schools, and negotiation of waivers or modifications to the collective bargaining agreement is required for new schools).

When describing how the school will use autonomy over staffing policies and procedures, applicant groups should:

- ✓ Provide a staffing chart and narrative staffing plan which includes a description of the leadership structure.
- ✓ Describe how the proposed staffing pattern and job descriptions/roles will differ from the traditional district patterns and how the staffing pattern will ensure adequate instruction and services to special education and English language learners.
- ✓ Provide reasons for why the proposed staffing structure is necessary for the school to achieve its mission.
- ✓ *For conversions:* Explain how this staffing plan differs from the school's current structure and why these changes are necessary.
- ✓ Describe the school's working conditions for administration and staff, and the general areas in which working conditions will diverge from collective bargaining agreements, including collaborative planning time for faculty.

- ✓ Describe the process by which the school will annually determine the working conditions for staff.
- ✓ Describe how the decision-making process will ensure broad staff support for the working conditions that are determined.
- ✓ **IP:** Describe how the school principal, administrators, faculty, and staff will be recruited, employed, evaluated and compensated in the proposed school and any proposed waivers or modifications of collective bargaining agreements.
- ✓ **IP:** Specifically identify provisions for which working conditions will diverge from collective bargaining agreements. Be sure to note whether the school will hire staff regardless of their current status (member of the district or not, although every teacher hired becomes a member of the local teachers union) and how the school will deal with excessing staff (into the district pool) that do not fulfill the needs of the school.
- ✓ **IP:** Describe how the approved working conditions will be communicated to all current and prospective staff in a manner that ensures understanding and commitment by all staff within the school.
- ✓ **IP:** Describe the school's plan to provide high-quality professional development and support/resources to its administrators, teachers and staff to assist in the implementation of new curriculum, instructional methods, assessments, and other programmatic structures.
- ✓ **IP:** *For conversions*, explain how plans for professional development differ from the school's current practice (or district requirements) and why these changes are necessary.

#### **D. District Policies and Procedures**

Innovation Schools have the freedom to set their own unique policies and procedures that are different from those of the district.

When describing how the school will use autonomy related to district policies and procedures, applicant groups should:

- ✓ Describe the school's proposed governance and decision-making structure.
- ✓ Describe the process by which decisions about major policies, programs, and budget will be made and how staff and parents will be involved.
- ✓ *For conversions:* Explain how the proposed governance structure differs from the school's current structure and why the changes are necessary.
- ✓ Provide reasons for why the proposed governance and decision-making structure is necessary for the school to achieve its mission.
- ✓ Identify any other areas in which the school will seek flexibility and autonomy from the district, including but not limited to:
  - Enrollment process
  - Homework policy
  - Code of conduct
  - Parental involvement
  - Principal selection and evaluation
  - Teacher supervision/support

- Promotion/graduation standards
- ✓ For each area, provide an outline of the policy or procedure and reasons why flexibility from district is necessary for the school to achieve its mission.
- ✓ *For conversions:* For each proposed policy or procedure change, explain the differences from the school's current practice and why the changes are necessary.
- ✓ **IP:** Provide a draft of the particular policy or procedure for which autonomy from the district is proposed.
- ✓ **IP:** Provide an organizational chart.
- ✓ **IP:** Describe the role of the school council as it relates to governance and the decision-making process.

## E. Budget

Innovation Schools are intended to be a fiscally-neutral reform option. At the present time, no additional ongoing operational funds will be available to an Innovation School, but the school will have increased flexibility and autonomy over the use of the funds allocated to the school by the district. For each school year, Innovation Schools will receive the same per pupil allocation as any other school in the district. Additionally, Innovation Schools may choose district discretionary services (e.g., district instructional coaches, textbooks, district professional development) or receive the equivalent per pupil funds added to their school allocation.

When describing how the school will use budget autonomy, applicant groups should:

- ✓ Identify specific priority areas (staffing, services, etc.) that the school proposes to direct funds to, how this may differ from traditional school spending structures in the district (e.g., describe whether teachers will be paid differently or if contracted services will be utilized to provide certain services.)
- ✓ Provide reasons for why these budget priority areas are necessary for the school to achieve its mission.
- ✓ *For conversions:* Identify specific priority areas (staffing, services, etc.) that the school proposes to redirect funds to, specific areas it will de-prioritize, and why these changes are necessary.
- ✓ **IP:** Explain the proposed financial arrangement with the local district that ensures the Innovation School's autonomy over its operations and ensures that the school receives district funds equitably. Please be sure to discuss the following:
  - How funds will be allocated to the Innovation School (e.g., weighted lump sum per-pupil formula).
  - If and how the Innovation School will be able to access central district services (e.g., district instructional coaches, textbooks, professional development) in exchange for an equivalent adjustment in the funding they receive from the district.
  - How the Innovation School will access funds and procure goods and services.
- ✓ **IP:** Provide a three-year school-level budget which includes a detailed description of how funds will be used differently in the school to support school performance and student achievement.

### ***III. CAPACITY OF APPLICANT GROUP***

Along with operational autonomy and flexibility, Innovation Schools take on additional responsibilities for stewardship of public funds. It is important that individuals proposing to start an Innovation School possess a wide variety of skills and qualifications that will enable them to develop and sustain an excellent school. Members of an applicant group may eventually work at, oversee, advise, or govern the proposed Innovation School.

When describing the capacity of the applicant group, applicant groups should:

- ✓ Describe briefly how the applicant group or design team that came together to develop this proposal and why the group is united to establish the proposed Innovation School.
- ✓ Identify the primary author(s) of the proposal.
- ✓ Summarize each member of the applicant group's experience and qualifications briefly within the text of the document. The experience and qualifications should demonstrate that the applicant group and/or proposed leadership of the school:
  - have experience and qualifications necessary to implement the proposal;
  - demonstrate the capacity to found and sustain an excellent Innovation School;
  - can manage public funds effectively and responsibly;
  - include members who possess skills and experience in areas such as education, management, finance, development and law; and
  - have tangible ties to, and broad and diverse representation from the community(ies) the school will serve.

*Note:* Please attach a statement of commitment and resume for each applicant group member and specify whether the individual is proposed to be a board member, school leader, or to hold any other positions at the school. (Statements of commitment and resumes in the attachments are not counted toward the page limit.)

- ✓ If the applicant group includes the proposed school leader(s) (or any other position at the school), indicate the process used to determine that the individual(s) is the best candidate for the position and why s/he has the capacity to effectively utilize additional autonomy.
- ✓ *For conversions:* Describe the school's preparedness and capacity to convert into an Innovation School.
- ✓ **IP:** Describe the planning process utilized by the innovation plan committee to develop the proposal
- ✓ **IP:** Attach letters of support from key partner organizations (these attachments are not counted toward the page limit.)



#### ***IV. TIMETABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ESTABLISHMENT***

It is important that the applicant team have a thorough plan for the development and establishment of the proposed Innovation School once approved.

When describing the timetable for the development and establishment of the proposed Innovation School, applicant groups should:

- ✓ Provide a description of the process that will be or has been used to involve appropriate stakeholders in the development of the innovation plan
- ✓ Articulate a proposed timetable for the development and establishment of the Innovation School. Include a timeline of major activities to be conducted over the period of time prior to the school's opening that will ensure a successful launch of the school. The timeline should address such aspects as facility, operations, budget, staff hiring, student recruitment and enrollment, curriculum, assessment, student support, and public and family engagement, ensuring that all are in place by the time school opens.

#### ***V. MEASURABLE ANNUAL GOALS***

In order to assess the proposed school across multiple measures of school performance and student success, the innovation plan must include measurable annual goals in at least the following areas: (i) student attendance; (ii) student safety and discipline; (iii) student promotion and graduation and dropout rates; (iv) student achievement on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System; (v) progress in areas of academic underperformance; and (vi) progress among subgroups of students, including low-income students as defined by chapter 70, limited English-proficient students and students receiving special education; (vii) reduction of achievement gaps among different groups of students.

These measurable annual goals will provide the basis for renewing or modifying the innovation plan at the end of the period of authorization.

Please complete the Measurable Annual Goal template (this document is being developed) which contains suggested measurable annual goals with information about ambitious-but-attainable targets.

#### ***VI. REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS***

The following attachments are required\* and should be sequentially numbered and clearly referred to in the text. They do not count toward the page limit.

- ☐ Statements of commitment and resumes from each applicant group member.
- ☐ *For conversions:* Current School Improvement Plan.